



Office of the Attorney General
State of Texas

DAN MORALES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 24, 1998

Mr. Jay Garrett
City Attorney
City of Greenville
P.O. Box 1049
Greenville, Texas 75403-1049

OR98-2861

Dear Mr. Garrett:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 121851.

You assert that section 552.103 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the requested information. Section 552.103(a) of the Government Code reads as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information:

(1) relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature or settlement negotiations, to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party; and

(2) that the attorney general or the attorney of the political subdivision has determined should be withheld from public inspection.

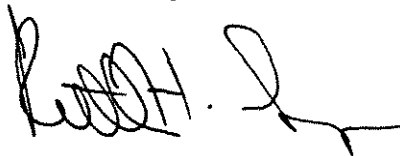
A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the applicability of an exception in a particular situation. The test for establishing that section 552.103(a) applies is a two-prong showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *University of Texas Law Sch. v. Texas Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479 (Tex. App.--Austin, 1997, no pet.); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210 (Tex. App.--Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.);

Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991). In this instance, you have made the requisite showing that the requested information relates to litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). We note, however, that information filed with a court is generally a matter of public record. *Star-Telegram, Inc. v. Walker*, 834 S.W.2d 54 (Tex. 1992). We therefore conclude that to the extent that the submitted affidavit has not been filed with the court, it and the other documents at issue may be withheld from disclosure under section 552.103(a).

We note that if the opposing party in the litigation has seen or had access to the information, there is no section 552.103(a) interest in withholding that information from the requestor. Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). In addition, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation concludes. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982). However, if the records contain information that is confidential by law, you must not release such information even at the conclusion of the litigation. Gov't Code §§ 552.101, .352

In light of our conclusion under section 552.103(a), we need not address the applicability of other exceptions, if any. We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth H. Soucy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ruth H. Soucy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RHS/mjc

Ref.: ID# 121851

Enclosures: Submitted documents

cc: Ms. Jean Marie Alexander
531 Ladin Lane
Austin, Texas 78734
(w/o enclosures)